As the December Sun Is Setting

Posted originally on the Archive of Our Own at http://archiveofourown.org/works/829343.

Rating:	Teen And Up Audiences
Archive Warning:	Creator Chose Not To Use Archive Warnings
Category:	M/M
Fandoms:	Hannibal (TV), Hannibal Lecter Series - All Media Types
Relationships:	Will Graham/Hannibal Lecter, Will Graham & Hannibal Lecter
Characters:	Will Graham, Hannibal Lecter, Abigail Hobbs, Alana Bloom, Jack Crawford
Additional Tags:	Coma, Alternate Universe - Canon Divergence, Canon-Typical Violence, Murder Family, Family Drama, Memory Loss, Mindfuck, Fluff and Angst
Language:	English
Series:	Part 1 of Both A Beginning And An End
Stats:	Published: 2013-06-04 Words: 2,394 Chapters: 1/1

As the December Sun Is Setting

by thisisthefamilybusiness

Summary

They tell Will he’s been comatose for the past five months, but nothing else. They tell him that if he doesn’t remember what happened right now, it’ll come back to him over time, especially since he seems to have perfect memory otherwise.
(Fill for the following prompt from hannibalkink: "After a particularly disturbing crime scene, Will blacks out. He comes to on a hospital bed. He thinks he just lost time and had an accident until the doctors tell him that he's been in a coma for several months and his husband Hannibal and daughter Abigail have been called and are coming to see him right away. Essentially a mindfuck!fic with a happy ending.")

Notes

This goes AU at some unknown point before Potage; the title comes from 'Brothers on a Hotel Bed' by Death Cab for Cutie.
More apologies in advance: I also have only a vague idea of how old Abigail is canon, and everything I know about comas/memory loss comes from House and Wikipedia, so if things aren't quite adding up, that's on me.

There is something in his throat, gagging him, keeping him from swallowing properly, and several other *somethings* stuck on his chest, in his arms, all around his torso.

Raw panic consumes him, the image of a little girl crucified on her own pink princess sheets tattooed behind his eyelids as he opens his eyes to disorienting bright lights and flails, trying to pull out the obstruction in his throat so he can breathe, even though he feels like the world is spinning in slow motion, every move straining and aching his muscles as he kicks at the blankets covering his body.

Soft but strong hands grab him and push him back down, shining more bright white lights in his face and shouting at him, but he can't quite hear whoever it is, can't quite make out what they're yelling, like he's listening to people talk underwater.

Three pairs of hands hold him down until someone, at last, pulls the tube from his throat, and he can almost-but-not-quite understand what the people are saying, can finally see most of his surroundings, even if they don't quite make sense yet.

"Please, sir, calm down and stop struggling..." a calm female voice repeats, and he relaxes into the cushion of what must be a bed, lets them rearrange whatever all those wires and tubes are doing all over his skin and chest.

The woman who spoke to him is wearing cheerful blue scrubs that match those of the others helping her work. He stares to his left and notices that all his wires and tubes are connected to a rather-dazzling array of medical machinery.

It occurs to him that this is a hospital, so the people around him must be nurses and doctors, but how did he get to a hospital? The very last thing he can remember is that little brunette girl and her blood-splattered collection of dolls, staring at her corpse until he felt the world fade behind the swinging of an imaginary pendulum.

He tries to speak, but only manages to cough and sputter, trying to focus his memory backwards, failing miserably. Jack, Jack had been there, at the scene with him, had taken him through all the details and warned him about just how horrifying it was to look at. What the hell had happened, had he blacked out? Had he had another memory failure? Had he gotten so caught up in the case that he lost himself and got in an accident, like Hannibal had always warned him about, like he had always feared—

"Please don't try to speak," the calm nurse from earlier says. "Blink your eyes once for yes, twice for no, understand?"

He blinks once.

"Do you know your name?"

His name. Oh. Will, Will Graham. He blinks once.

"Will Graham, yes?"

He blinks once again.

“Do you know where you are?”

He blinks twice.

“You’re in Sacred Heart Hospital, in Baltimore, Maryland.”

Silently, Will strains to read the numbers of the digital clock on the wall across from his bed.

His name is Will Graham, he’s in Baltimore, and it’s 2:19 PM.

They tell Will he’s been comatose for the past five months, but nothing else. They tell him that if he doesn’t remember what happened right now, it’ll come back to him over time, especially since he seems to have perfect memory otherwise.

They tell him that they’ve already notified Hannibal, who’s on his way over as fast as he can manage, which is strangely reassuring, because Will doesn’t know who else he would have told them to call. Alana? Jack? It’s not as though Will has many friends, especially those who’d stick around if he was comatose for most of a year.

There’s a fresh-looking vase of red poppies sitting on the windowsill, but there’s no cards to indicate who sent them, so Will assumes it was probably a charity thing. People took pity on the unconscious, he figures.

When Hannibal walks in, still looking perfectly composed in one of his brown plaid suits and purple paisley ties, Will relaxes ever so slightly; a familiar face in a sea of strangers and all that. Perhaps it was just the pain medication they’d pumped him full of talking, but Will could have sworn that Hannibal looked almost *excessively* relieved and overjoyed as he collapsed into the chair beside Will’s bed.

But there is no confusion about the way Hannibal grabs one of Will’s hands and folds it between his own, pressing his fingers to his lips. “My good Will,” Hannibal whispers softly, and if Will wasn’t so damned confused about what was happening, he might have blushed.

Abigail looks less composed than Hannibal when she sprints in to the room, wearing jeans and a blue blouse to match the floral scarf around her neck, and Will is decidedly less relaxed. “Daddy.” She comes to a skidding stop on the opposite side of Will’s bed as Hannibal, pressing a kiss to Will’s clammy forehead as she twines the fingers of his hand not currently claimed by Hannibal with her delicate ones. “Daddy, you’re awake.”

Even for spending the past five months in a coma, there is no real logical explanation for the way Hannibal and Abigail are beaming down on him.

“He is not allowed to speak yet, because of the tube,” Hannibal says quickly. “But he should be able to talk to us in about four days, and Dr. Sutcliffe informed me that so long as no major complications arise, our Will shall be home with us in less than three weeks.”

Our Will?

Abigail sits down on the bed beside him and Will can't quite decide one way or another, but he thinks that she may be trying not to cry.

Perhaps that memory hole he'd theorised about was a bit bigger than he originally imagined.

The nurse drops a bag on Will's bed and smiles. "Dr. Lecter brought something by for you. He said they might make you feel a little better." She pulls out a little black velvet box and Will's stomach bottoms out. He thinks he'd puke, if they'd given him any solid food yet.

Still smiling, the nurse opens it up and slips the plain silver band on Will's ring finger. "You're a very lucky man to have such a gentleman like that Dr. Lecter."

It's not the nurse's fault, but, if anything, Will feels worse than before. Christ, how much time had he lost between the little dead girl with her purple bedroom and waking up in a hospital bed? It would have had to been over a year, because there is no way that Will would have just accepted a marriage proposal from Hannibal-fucking-Lecter, who was his *psychiatrist* and *colleague* and, at very best, his friend. And there was no way that the Abigail Hobbs Will knew, who had told Will that he was never going to be her father, would have been reduced to tears at him waking up.

But, then again, how was he to know that his body did when his mind wasn't present?

Hannibal takes him home on a warm spring afternoon, and frowns a little when Will signs his name Will Graham on the paperwork. Will supposes he's probably Will Graham-Lecter or something now, but Hannibal doesn't comment on it and just helps him carry his suitcase out to the expensive-looking silver car.

The car ride is silent as scenery flies past them, and Will wonders in the back of his mind if he moved in with Hannibal or if it was vice-versa. He wonders a lot of things like that in the silence. Did they keep his dogs? Did Abigail ever get into college? Why hadn't Alana or Jack or Katz called yet? What had happened to little dead Lacy Walker and her princess bed sheets?

It turns out that Will was wrong both ways about the 'moving in' bit. He doesn't recognise the house that Hannibal's pulled into the long gravel driveway of at all; a white two-story antebellum mansion with what looks like acres of forested land around it. They must be in Virginia, if Will's sense of direction hasn't failed him.

It looks... Well, it looks exactly like the kind of place that he could see agreeing to buying with Hannibal. Even the interior, with its dark neutral color scheme, feels like a perfectly measured mixture of them both.

Will tries not to stare at the photos on the wall like a voyeur, tries to focus on petting and greeting the four dogs that ambush him when Hannibal opens the front door, but it's hard. He sees himself helping Hannibal cut a wedding cake, running along a beach with Abigail and one of his dogs, sitting beside Hannibal and Abigail on a log around a campfire and laughing with her at Hannibal's look of discomfort with the situation. He wonders if he'll ever get those memories back.

"Are you feeling alright?" Hannibal settles one hand on Will's shoulder and helps him up, leads him to a big powder-blue sofa Will thinks he's seen before in Hannibal's office.

"Yes," Will says, but it's a lie, and it's obvious, even to him. He's never been a very good liar.

"Please be honest with me, Will. You are distressed. I do not like seeing you distressed."

"I—I don't know what I'm doing here."

"What you are doing...home? Do you feel that you need time to recover, or..."

"This, this isn't my home, Hannibal," Will stammers out, staring down at a photo of Abigail in a rose-colored prom dress standing in front of the house. "I don't—" His voice cracks. "The last thing I remember, I was standing at a crime scene and staring at the body of a dead little girl in Virginia. And then, I was waking up in a hospital room in Maryland."

"Oh." Hannibal's expression does not change, but Will has spent a lifetime understanding people who do not want to be understood, and he can feel the disappointment coiling in Hannibal's gut.

"Look, I just remember you as a psychiatrist. My psychiatrist, actually, my colleague, not my —my husband. And Abigail, Abigail wouldn't even really talk to me, because I'm the FBI agent who killed her father and her mother and almost got her killed—"

"Will, please, look at me." Hannibal gently forces a hand under his chin and looks him evenly in the eyes. "I am a psychiatrist, yes, but you have never been my patient, and you repair boat engines, you are not an FBI agent. We have been together for years. I am Abigail's biological father, Will, and Alana Bloom is her biological mother. She is ours, has always been ours, for all seventeen years." Hannibal stood up for a moment, to pull a plain black leather book off of a shelf and flip it open to a photo of them both sitting beside Alana on a hospital bed, a bundle of blankets with a pink scrunched-up face in her arms. He flips the page and there's a photo of Will holding the bundle of blankets—baby Abigail—and Will is smiling up at the camera.

"I'm not an FBI agent," Will repeats, eyeing the photo.

Hannibal shakes his head and drops the photo album into Will's lap. "No. You were a police officer, but you left the force after Abigail was born."

"I've never—I've never killed anyone."

Concern colors Hannibal's expression. "Never."

“And Alana—Alana is...”

“Alana was my colleague and our friend, and Abigail’s biological mother.”

“Do I know a Jack Crawford?”

“Yes, he worked with you when you were still on the force.”

“Can... Can I use the phone, please?”

“This is your home, Will, even if you do not remember as such. You may do as you wish.”

Hannibal holds a small dinner party for his return home, invites over Alana and Jack and Jack’s wife and Zeller and Katz and Price, and if they notice that the Will eating pork chops with them is different than the Will they once knew, they don’t comment on it.

Will sleeps in one of the guest bedrooms with the dogs and buys himself a whole new wardrobe of clothes, because wearing the ones this... other Will Graham (Will Lecter, he corrects himself) once wore would make him feel like an imposter.

When Will settles in to bed for the first few nights, he expects to wake in a cold sweat, visions of the dead dancing in his mind, but the nightmares do not come, and eventually, he does go to bed with Hannibal, in his ridiculous silk-sheeted bed, and there is no more sleepwalking. He does not black out. He does not get headaches or see the ghosts of the long-gone in the corner of his eyes.

Abigail does not talk of hunting or of deer or of Garret Jacobs Hobbs, because Abigail has never been to Minnesota, and her last name is Lecter. She does not know how to skin a buck, and somehow, Will finds that comforting. She can fish, though, because Will taught her how to, and she can fix an engine and sail a boat, and she wears scarves because she likes the way the look, not because she has something to hide behind them.

And when Hannibal wants to cook, he takes Will shopping with him to expensive organic stores, and when he stares at Will like he’s lost his mind for not knowing that he’s a vegetarian (who will only *occasionally* sample the fish Will and Abigail catch in the lake on their property), Will almost pisses himself in laughter.

Freddie Lounds is just their annoying nosy neighbour, and Jack Crawford only sends them cards on birthdays and holidays, and the closest to a murder Will has come in the months since he woke up has been reading about one in the morning newspaper while he waits for Hannibal to finish cooking breakfast.

And for the first time in possibly forever, Will Graham is stable. Will Graham is—content.

He closes his newspaper when Hannibal sets a plate of eggs and sausage down in front of him.

The back page advertises the Little Miss Virginia beauty pageant, and from underneath the neon pink text, little Lacy Walker smiled, alive and well.

Will does not notice.

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